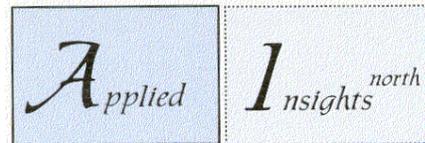


Recommended
Elementary School Attendance Boundaries
with Bus Routing Considerations
for the
Rock Ridge School District

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Purpose

Implementation of Rock Ridge Public School district’s facility plan includes the renovation of the Parkview Elementary PreK-2 school in Virginia and construction of two new elementary schools—a grade 3-6 in Virginia and a PreK-6 in Eveleth-Gilbert. The district retained the Consultant Team to analyze the geographic distribution of enrolled student residences and recommend an attendance boundary between the two Virginia elementary schools and their Eveleth-Gilbert counterpart. The Consultant Team was also asked to provide within the recommendation support for enhanced efficiency for future bus routes.

This report presents the recommended elementary school attendance boundary, describes the process by which the recommendation was developed, and supporting materials.

Process

The recommended attendance boundary was developed through this process:

- **Analysis of student residence:** For the 2020/21 school year the residences of students attending Rock Ridge schools were geocoded on a map of the district and surrounding area. This was the basis for analysis of the geographic distribution of students who attend each school. More important, it became the foundation for analyzing how to best assign students to the new schools. While all PreK-12 students were geocoded, the analysis focused on PreK-6 enrollment. [See Appendix A for detailed information.]
- **Alternative boundary scenarios:** Alternative boundary scenarios were prepared. They shared common assumptions regarding the design enrollment capacity of the three elementary schools and rules for intra-district open enrollment as well as for non-resident student enrollment. Scenarios were devised to achieve different objectives such as balanced school utilization (percent of design capacity being used), minimizing student bus travel time, and optimizing bus routing. [See Appendix B for descriptions and analysis.]
- **School Board review:** The initial analysis of the student geocoding effort and first draft boundary scenarios were presented to the School Board. Questions and comments raised at that session led to restructured and new scenarios as well as additional analysis.
- **Community survey:** An online survey was used to obtain community input on four scenarios. Although the survey focused on households with students currently or intending to attend Rock Ridge schools, anyone could take it. [See Appendix C for copy of the survey and results.]
- **Final recommendation:** This report incorporates the information, analysis, and commentary generated by the above process and offers the Consultant Team’s recommended elementary school attendance boundary.

Recommended Elementary School Attendance Boundary

The recommended elementary school attendance boundary presented here accommodates the mapping analysis, initial school board input, and the community survey. The recommended boundary is a modified version of Scenario C (Option 2 on the survey) described in Appendix B.

Map 1 depicts the recommended elementary school attendance boundary for Rock Ridge and Table 1 provides relevant information. Attendance assignments are as follows:

- Parkview Elementary and New Virginia Elementary:** all students within the district living in the city of Virginia and areas to the north, and, students open enrolling in from Chisholm, Hibbing, Mt. Iron-Buhl, St. Louis County schools north of Virginia, and northern portion of Mesabi East (Biwabik, Aurora, Hoyt Lakes).
- New Eveleth-Gilbert Elementary:** all students within the district living in Gilbert, Eveleth, West Eveleth, Leonidas and areas to the south (Fayal Township), and, students open enrolling in from St. Louis County Schools to the southwest and south (Cherry, Clinton, Forbes, McDavitt, Lavell, Makinen, Central Lakes) and southern portion of Mesabi East (Palo, Markham).

Table 1. Recommended Assignment of District Areas to Elementary Schools

Areas	2020/21 Students	Assigned to School in:		Number Assigned	
		Eveleth-Gilbert	Virginia	Eveleth-Gilbert	Virginia
Eveleth	229	100%	0%	229	0
Gilbert	98	100%	0%	98	0
Rural Eveleth-Gilbert	169	100%	0%	169	0
Midway	56	0%	100%	0	56
Rural Virginia	157	0%	100%	0	157
Virginia	444	0%	100%	0	444
Chisholm / Hibbing	20	0%	100%	0	20
Mesabi East	42	40%	60%	17	25
Mt Iron-Buhl	122	0%	100%	0	122
ISD 2142 North	71	0%	100%	0	71
ISD 2142 SE	23	100%	0%	23	0
ISD 2142 SW	17	100%	0%	17	0
Total	1,448			553	895

PreK enrollment	47	138
K-6 enrollment	506	757
School K-6 design capacity	525	1,090
Percent of K-6 capacity:	96%	69%

The new Eveleth-Gilbert school will be close to its design capacity while Virginia schools would operate at just over two-thirds of their combined capacity.

This assignment of students open enrolling into the district eliminates all likely busing inefficiencies although Midway students have a longer ride than if they attended the new Eveleth-Gilbert school.

Bus Routing Considerations

Actual bus routes will change from year to year based on where students live. With that in mind alternative scenarios and the recommended boundary option were evaluated with this general approach to busing:

- Minimize bus travel distance for students.
- Minimize bus transportation costs through efficient routing by assigning large geographic blocks to a single school.

Applying those objectives to the recommended attendance areas finds:

- Within the district, attendance is in clear, easily to route geographic blocks close to the students' assigned schools.
- Midway students are closer to the new Eveleth-Gilbert school but since all are being bused the issue is only the matter of time on a bus. The difference between attending schools in Virginia versus the new Eveleth-Gilbert school is not insignificant but it reflects current practice and parents in Midway clearly support this option.
- Students open enrolling into Rock Ridge are assigned in clear, large geographic blocks and are assigned to the schools closest to them.
- The split of Mesabi East into north and south areas allows for a convenient route handling Hoyt Lakes, Aurora and Biwabik students. Students living in the southern half of Mesabi East can easily be handled with buses running through Fayal Township to the new Eveleth-Gilbert school.